

Lang's Short-tailed Blue *Leptotes pirithous* (L.) (Lep.: Lycaenidae) and other butterflies on Madeira Island

Further to my record of *Leptotes pirithous* on Fuerteventura, Canary Islands on 30 March 1998 (*Ent. Rec.* **110**: 289-290) we report that this butterfly was observed on Madeira for the first time on 25 August 2001. We found it to be quite common in the Botanical Gardens in Funchal, ovipositing on a violet flowered Runner Bean *Phaseolus* sp., *Teline maderensis* and *Plumbago capensis*. The following day we found it at four separate sites both above and below Poiso, between 1400 and 1450m; typically in this area it was found in sheltered hollows near flowering gorse bushes *Ulex europea*, always flying with the Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus* (L.) which necessitated careful observation to avoid confusion. We were able to photograph *L. pirithous* and take a short series of males and females. Unfortunately lack of time prevented us from seeing if it was more widely distributed, however this record does confirm an extension of its range in the Atlantic islands.

During our visit we noticed that *Danaus plexippus* (L.) was widespread, some individuals reaching up to 1500m, with ova and larvae found on both *Asclepias curassavica* in the gardens of Funchal and on *Gomphocarpus fruticosus* as high as 1300m above the Encumeada Pass. We also found that *Catopsilia florella* Fabricius had now become quite widespread in Funchal after its first sighting in 1999 by Aguiar (*Bocagiana* **199**: 1-4) with ova and larvae on most *Cassia didymobotrya* bushes that we investigated and several sightings of the adults. It is also pleasing to report that *Hipparchia aristaeus maderensis* Bethune-Baker was extremely abundant on the Paul da Serra plateau. At Bica da Cana and Estanquinos at 1560m, they rose in dozens with each step through the grass or along the road, but unfortunately many were being killed by passing traffic.

Since returning from Madeira we have learnt that Martin Gascoigne-Pees has also a new record of *L. pirithous*, from Lanzarote in February 2000, details of this and his other new records and observations are to be published shortly.— D. HALL, 5 Curborough Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7NG and P. J. C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow, Wessex Avenue, East Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8NP.

What is happening to the Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* (L.) (Lep.: Nymphalidae)?

Many of us must have noticed a drastic reduction, amounting in some areas to a near-disappearance, of what has long been regarded as our commonest British butterfly. There may indeed still be favoured parts of the country where it is as numerous as ever: that I am in no position to deny. Only for my own district can I speak positively — yet with a strong impression that things are not greatly different in many other parts. One can but hope that this familiar species (whose beauty so charmed the late Richard South) is not